FALL HOME & GARDEN GUIDE TO THE NORTHERN BERKS MERCHANDISER FOR SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

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Page 1 - Hm&Gdn

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Fall is a great time to tackle projects around the house. The weather each fall allows homeowners to make improvements to their homes' exteriors without worrying about extreme heat or cold, while interior projects like painting are made easier because homeowners can open the windows to allow for proper ventilation.

Fall also marks a great time to prepare for upcoming projects that can make winter work that much easier. For example, fall is a great time to take stock of your gutters so you can address any issues before leaves begin to fall or the first snowstorm touches down. Compromised gutters can con-tribute to water issues in basements and adversely affect a home's foundation if not addressed immediately, so it behooves homeowners to learn the signs that gutters are in need of repair or replacement. Gutters hanging off the home: Gutters were once installed predominantly with spikes. However, many industry professionals now install gutters with hanger brackets. Why the change? Spikes loosen over time, leading to the gutters hanging off the home. That can contribute to serious issues if left untreated. Gutters hanging off the home need not necessarily be replaced, but rather secured to the home, ideally with hanger brackets instead of spikes. Brackets hook into the front of the gutter and are then screwed into the fascia of a home. A professional who specializes in gutter repair can perform this task relatively quickly, and it's an inexpensive yet highly effective solution. Gutter separation: Gutters that are no longer fastened together can leak and contribute to issues that affect the home's foundation, siding and appear-ance. Clogs and the accumulation of debris can cause gutters to separate because they are not designed to hold too much Page 2- Hm&Gdn

weight. Replacement of separated gutters may or may not be necessary depending on how big the problem is and the condition of the existing gutters. If replacement is not necessary, separated gutters may be remedied by securing the joints, another relatively simple and inexpensive fix.

• Peeling exterior paint: Paint that appears to be peeling off of your home may indicate that water is seeping over the edge of the gutter closest to your home. When that happens, water is coming down the side of the house, causing the paint to peel. In such instances, replacing the gutters is often necessary.

Basement flooding: Not all signs of deteriorating gutters are outside a home. Many a homeowner has been flummoxed by flooding in their basements, and such flooding can be caused by aging, ineffective gutters. That's because deteriorating gutters sometimes allow water to leak near the foundation of a home, contributing to basement flooding.
Fall is an ideal time to inspect gutters and have any issues fixed before leaves begin to fall or harsh winter weather arrives.

Ideation that gets eight full hours of sunlight per day.
 If using an existing garden site, clear out any detritus from summer plants and any weeds that have sprouted. If you are planting a new garden, remove any turf before tilling the soil.
 Amend the soil with sand, and the soil with sand, and the soil with sand.

compost, manure fertilizer, and

#### How To Prevent Simple Plumbing Problems

No homeowner wants to be confronted with plumbing problems, which many associate with costly repairs and water damage. But many plumbing problems are preventable if homeowners take the time to learn about them and make the effort to nip them in the bud before they become something major.

• Clogged kitchen sink: Kitchen sinks get used quite a bit in the average home, and what makes its way down the sinks can coneach person to remove their hair from the drain upon getting out of the shower. If you suspect the drain might already be on its way to clogging, use a wet/dry vac to remove any hair that might have started piling up in the pipes.

 Washing machines: Few homeowners may think to periodically inspect their washing machines, but normal wear and tear on washing machine hoses can gradually build up, potentially leading to flooding if left unchecked. Periodically inspect hoses for cracks and other damage, replacing them if they look especially vulnerable. • Water heater: Water heaters also can produce plumbing problems if homeowners don't keep an eye on them. Rusty tank fittings on water heaters are a warning sign that the heater might need some repairs. When left unchecked, water heaters can cause flooding that produces significant water damage, and water heaters may even need to be replaced, which can be very expensive. If you detect any problems with your heater, call in a plumber to confirm if anything is awry and address the problem.



tribute to plumbing problems. Avoid pouring gravy, grease, cooking oil, or fat down the kitchen sink, as these substances can cling to the pipes and lead to a backed up sink and a potentially messy situation. Discard thick liquids and sauces in the trash can instead of the sink. Periodically turn the faucet on as hot as it can go and run it for a few minutes to dislodge anything that might have stuck to the pipes.

• Clogged shower drain: The pipes in the shower/bathtub can easily become clogged as well. Hair is the main culprit when shower drains get clogged, so install hair traps that catch any hair you and others might shed while they are bathing. Instruct

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#### 7 Uses For Fallen Leaves

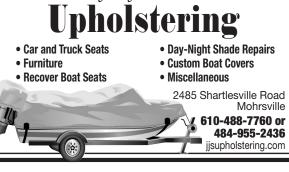
By the time autumn hits full swing, many trees will have shed their leaves for the season, and the last vestiges of yellow and orange magic red. will have faded to brown. Raking, blowing and collecting leaves becomes the primary chores of lawn and yard maintenance, and presents most homeowners with large piles of gathered leaves to tend to.

It is impossible to count just how many leaves fall to the ground each year, or just how many pounds of leaves get collected curbside, but the numbers are substantial. Cleaning up leaves is considerable work, but not all of those leaves need to be carted away. In fact, there are several different uses of leaves that can be beneficial.

1. Spread leaves as a protective mulch to cover tender perennials or root crops/bulbs in the



John J. Stetzler





**Pole Barns** Residential

ground. The leaves will form a natural insulating cover that keeps the soil and the plants within a bit warmer over winter. 2. Create a pile of leaves that will break down and form a crumbly, compost-like material called leaf mold. Even though leaf mold may sound like a blight, it's actually a good amendment to garden soil, improving its structure and ability to hold water. Leaf mold also attracts beneficial organisms that are vital in healthy soil.

3. Brown leaves can be added to green materials in compost piles to improve the health of the compost being formed. According to the healthy living resource Care2, the ideal ratio is 75 percent brown to 25 percent green materials in compost. Turn compost piles regularly to aerate them.

4. Store dried, mulched leaves in a dry spot so they can be used in the spring as a weed barrier for spring plantings. They will keep weeds at bay and help retain soil moisture to ensure small sprouts have the resources to grow

5. Use shredded leaves as a lawn supplement. Pass a lawn mower over leaves left on the lawn to break them down into pieces too small to rake. This will help keep the lawn healthy throughout the winter without blocking out needed sunlight. 6. Bag dried leaves and pack them tightly together in cold areas of the home, such as basements or garages. They

can act as added insulation. Bags of leaves also can be placed around planting containers to protect them from frost. 7. Gather a few of the best-looking leaves and preserve them. Use an iron on a low setting and press leaves between two pieces of waxed paper until the waxed paper seals together. Or use clear contact paper to achieve the same effect. Fallen leaves can be used in

many different ways throughout the year.

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#### **Prepare Your Deck For Winter**

rior of their homes in the weeks before winter's arrival, but such efforts should extend to the out

Homeowners often take steps to winterize the inte- can likely move the majority of that furniture into a garage or shed for the winter. Doing so will prevent

side of a home as well. Decks make for great gathering places when the

weather permits. Decks are where many people spend their free time and eat their meals come spring and summer, when the temperatures climb and the sun sets well into the evening. But as summer turns to fall, homeowners must take measures to protect their decks from potentially harsh winter weather

• Inspect the deck for problems. Decks tend to be used more often in summer than any other time of year. That makes fall and early winter an ideal time to inspect for wear and tear and any additional issues that may have cropped up throughout the summer. Damaged boards and loose handrails should be fixed before winter arrives, especially for homeowners who plan to use their decks in winter. Fixing such issues in winter and even into spring may be difficult thanks to harsh conditions, so make good use of the relatively calm autumn weather to fix any issues on the deck.

 Clear the deck of potted plants. Even homeowners who intend to use their decks in winter should remove potted plants from the deck in the fall. The home improvement experts at HGTV note that moisture can get trapped between deck boards and plastic, wood or ceramic containers in cold weather, and that can contribute to mildew, discoloration or decay.

 Store unnecessary furniture. Homeowners who like to sit on their decks in winter will no doubt want to leave some furniture out over the winter. But those with lots of furniture for entertaining guests

the potential formation of biemisnes on the deci that can result from inconsistent weathering.

· Remove snow, but do so carefully. Prolonged contact with snow and ice can damage a deck. As a result, homeowners should clear snow from their decks when accumulation is significant. HGTV recommends using a snow blower on the deck to avoid scarring. If a shovel must be used, push snow with the planks to reduce the risk of damaging the deck.

Homeowners who take steps to protect their decks throughout the winter months can ensure these popular areas are ready once entertaining season returns in the spring.



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Page 3- Hm&Gdn

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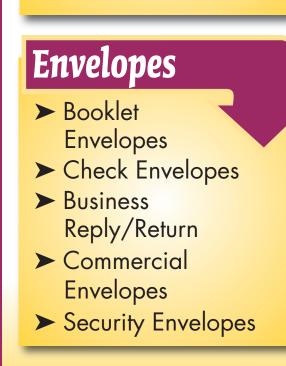
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